

SPSO decision report



Case: 202001137, A Medical Practice in the Lanarkshire NHS Board area
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C had been referred to the blood pressure clinic at the hospital by their previous GP practice, and when they did not hear from the clinic, they called their current practice to enquire about this. The practice told C that they had failed to attend an appointment at the clinic and that C was to contact the hospital in the first instance. C made enquiries with the clinic to be informed that they had indeed missed an appointment and that they should ask the GP for a further referral. C said they had not received the appointment letter.

We took independent clinical advice. We found that the practice had received notification by letter from the clinic that C had failed to attend an appointment and that should the practice deem C still required to be seen at the clinic, then they should initiate a further GP referral. We found that the practice should not have told C to contact the clinic as they were already aware that a further referral was required or that the practice could have decided to undertake more investigations locally to monitor C's blood pressure levels. We upheld the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to communicate to C whether their blood pressure issues could have been monitored by the practice or rerefer them to the blood pressure clinic. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Staff should be mindful of the need to fully communicate to patients about whether further investigations are required before a hospital referral is deemed necessary.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.